Program and poetics in Quintus Smyrnaeus' Posthomerica

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PROGRAM AND POETICS IN QUINTUS SMYRNAEUS' *POSTHOMERICA*

Epic continuation is a phrase which sums up exactly the nature of Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica*. There is, arguably, no work surviving from antiquity which so models itself on the great epic archetypes, the Homeric poems. Not only is the *Posthomerica* Homeric (or, hyper-Homeric) in its every aspect, from language and formulaic composition, to imagery, plot sequences, and narrative functions, the poem explicitly marks itself out as Homeric. In this chapter I will survey first, the ways in which the *Posthomerica* not only appears as, but asserts itself as, Homeric. As the focus of the chapter, I will discuss a number of short but important scenes which, meta-poetically, encode the epic distance the *Posthomerica* has from Homer, and which, therefore, bespeak the imitative program which Quintus, as a poet of the Imperial period, creates to *continue* Homer on the verges of Late Antiquity.

Greek Epic of the Imperial Period

The *Posthomerica* is a fourteen-book epic poem in Homeric-imitative Greek, which narrates the events of the Trojan War from the death of Hector to the eventual departure of the victorious Greeks.[1] Its account therefore includes episodes such as the deaths of Achilles and Ajax, of Penthesileia, Memnon, and Paris, the *hoplon krisis*, and the sack of Troy by means, principally, of the deception of the wooden horse (a series not found elsewhere in a single narrative poem). Thus the Latin translation *Posthomerica* of the Greek title τὰ μεθ' Ὅμηρον ("the things after Homer") is an accurate description of the contents of the epic, contents which neatly fill the gap in events left largely un-narrated by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It is no accident that three of the extant MSS. of the *Posthomerica* were found situated between MSS. of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* -- the early

[1] In this section, most of my discussion is derived from Maciver (2012a) 2-6. See, also, Vian (1963) vii-liii and Baumbach and Bär (2007) 1-26.

transmission of the text, therefore, was already an interpretative reception, namely, that the *Posthomerica* was a suitable means for bridging the gap in plots of the two more famous epics.[2] The *praenomen* Quintus ("Kointos" in Greek) is found in some of the MSS. headings, and the epithet "of Smyrna" is taken from the only seemingly autobiographical information we have in the poem, in the in-proem (12.306-13, discussed below),[3] where the narrator states that he was found by the Muses as he tended his sheep on the plains of Smyrna. We know nothing about Quintus of Smyrna apart from what the *Posthomerica* can tell us itself, which, too, is virtually nothing. Current consensus is that Quintus wrote the *Posthomerica* sometime in the third century A.D.[4] This date is essentially insecure, based as it is on a number of exiguous factors. In the first place, for Triphiodorus, who wrote a short *epyllion* called *The Sack of Troy*, which engages the *Posthomerica* extensively, and who (therefore) post-dates Quintus, there exists a papyrus fragment (*POxy*. 2946) which can be dated positively to the late third century (A.D.).[5] Apparent allusions to Oppian's *Halieutica* -- a work which can be firmly dated to the late second century -- have been taken by scholars to prove Quintus' dependence on Oppian, the earlier poet.

There are a number of (more far-fetched) dating criteria which I will pass over.[6] What is clear is that Quintus wrote at a time when epic poetry of a large scale was flourishing. We know, for example, of the massive 60 book epic on world history written by Pisander of Laranda, earlier in the third century. And if we include the evidence of papyri fragments of epic poetry for this period, what we have surviving is most likely "only the tip of the iceberg."[7] There was clearly an audience for large-scale epic on mythological themes (we can compare, two centuries later, the 48-book *Dionysiaca* of

[2] Further discussion at Maciver (2012a) 7-9.
[3] Tzetzes, the Byzantine scholar and poet, was the first to apply this epithet (cf. Vian (1963) vii-viii).
[4] Detailed discussion in Bär (2009) 14-23, James (2004) xvii-xxi, and Gärtner (2005), 23-6.
[5] Opinion is not unified among scholars on the indebtedness of Triphiodorus to Quintus, rather than the other way round: see, most recently, Tomasso (2012) 372-3 (who discusses scholarship to date on the issue). The proem of Triphiodorus, with its clear polemical distancing from the *Posthomerica*, demonstrably, in my opinion, points to its post-dating of Quintus (a point I discuss in an article (in-progress) on Triphiodorus).
[6] Details in Maciver (2012a) 4-6. Most recently, the papyrus which relates the *Vision of Dorotheus* (*PBodm.* 29), published in 1984, has been argued to have implications for our identification of Quintus. The fragmentary poem, in two places, refers to Dorotheus the son of Quintus (the poet), and recent scholarship has tentatively suggested that this poet is Quintus of Smyrna. The papyrus can be securely dated to around 400 A.D., and may be another firm *terminus ante quem*. As I have shown elsewhere (Maciver (2012a) 4-5, with further bibliographical details), two isolated mentions of a poet called Quintus cannot definitively be taken to refer to Quintus of Smyrna.
[7] Schubert (2007) 343, and passim. for further discussion.

Nonnus). The majority of scholarship on the *Posthomerica* assumes that the presumed loss of the Epic Cycle (the series of epics on Trojan and Theban sagas of the later archaic period, which survive now in only fragmentary form) by the time of the third century A.D. gave Quintus his reason for composing the *Posthomerica*, namely, to fill in the gap left by this loss. Firstly, there is no strong evidence to suggest that Quintus did not have access to the Epic Cycle; secondly, a poet does not need, as a ground for composition, the idea of replacement, in any era -- and in the era of Quintus, it has already been seen that there was an appetite for large-scale epic.[8]

A big book is, famously, a big evil, according to Callimachus (fr. 465 Pfeiffer), but not only has Quintus written a fourteen book epic, he has written on the Trojan War,[9] betraying the strictures of the slender Muse (*Aetia* 1.24 Pfeiffer).[10] Despite its anachronistic style which closely mimics the formulaic system found in Homer, the *Posthomerica* is nevertheless a literary, post-Hellenistic epic poem:[11] it is caught within a long series of evolutions in which Homer was recast and developed. Outwardly, the *Posthomerica* cannot be termed Callimachean or Alexandrian, but as epithets so often applied to Latin poetry to signal their allusive cleverness and demands upon a learned readership, they are not wholly out of place in describing the *Posthomerica*. The reader will not find widespread Alexandrian traits (as one would, to a greater extent, find in other Imperial Greek poems such as the *ps.*-Oppian *Cynegetica* or Triphiodorus), but Quintus does not only signal his indebtedness to Callimachus, but includes so-called Alexandrian footnotes occasionally in his poem.[12] Thus, Quintus is writing grand epic which also demands a learned readership, a reader characterized as a *pepaideumenos* -- a term used to describe those who had the *paideia* which marked the period often termed the Second Sophistic.

[8] Full discussion and references on the Epic Cycle problem can be found in Maciver (2012a) 8-9.
[9] Contrast Callimachus' disapprobation of such choices for epics (*Anth. Pal.* 12.43 (28 Pfeiffer).
[10] Vian (1963) xl argues that not only is Quintus' epic not Calliamachean, but rather is one that combats the very notion propounded by Callimachus.
[11] The *Posthomerica* neatly fits Hainsworth's definition of literary epic (1991), 9: "a 'sentimental' revival of the Homeric form of epic."
[12] For Quintus' relationship with Alexandrian poetry, and especially Apollonius of Rhodes, see Maciver (2012a) 14-16 and (2012b) passim. On Alexandrianism generally in Quintus, see Bär (2009) 12, 62, 57, and 77.

Homeric Continuation: Programmatic Readings of the *Posthomerica*

The *Posthomerica* begins exactly at the point at which the *Iliad* finishes:

εὖθ' ὑπὸ Πηλείωνι δάμη θεοείκελος Ἕκτωρ

καί ἑ πυρὴ κατέδαψε καὶ ὀστέα γαῖα κεκεύθει,

δὴ τότε Τρῶες ἔμιμνον ἀνὰ Πριάμοιο πόλήα

δειδιότες μένος ἠὺ θρασύφρονος Αἰακίδαο.[13]

After godlike Hector had been slain by the son of Peleus, and the pyre had consumed him and the earth covered his bones, the Trojans then stayed stuck inside Priam's city in fear of the noble strength of that brave descendant of Aeacus (*Posthomerica* 1.1-4).

The *Posthomerica* begins with a conjunction, not, as is usually the case for an epic poem, with a proem.[14] A conjunction links two co-ordinating sentences, and the topic of the first two lines of the poem is the final main action of the *Iliad*: Hector has been slain by Achilles, and his bones have been laid to rest. The "when" of εὖτε is, therefore, books 22-4 of the *Iliad*. No aims or rehearsals of the *Posthomerica*'s poetical ambition or content is given, but instead the reader is lead straight to the next point in the essentially Iliadic story: the Trojans remained in Troy in fear of Achilles. Thus, the title of the poem, translated most appositely by Vian in his edition of the poem -- "La Suite d'Homère" -- reflects precisely its nature: this is a sequel.[15] Quintus defies typical epic practice by beginning untypically. As a result, the reader is compelled to dig more deeply for poetological significations. Without dwelling further on these opening lines (a closer intertextual reading can be found elsewhere),[16] I will move instead to the most problematic passage in the poem, the in-proem of book 12, where the narrator describes his poetic initiation.[17] The decision to share apparently autobiographical details occurs just before the list of heroes who enter the wooden horse (12.314-30),

[13] The text of the *Posthomerica* is taken from Vian's magisterial Budé edition (1963-9).
[14] Fuller discussion on the programmatic implications of this lack of proem can be found in Maciver (2012a) 27-33.
[15] Vian 1963-9. On the poem as a sequel, and this conjunction as the link to the *Iliad*, see, further, Schenk (1997) 377, Keydell (1965) 1273, and Bär (2007) 32-3.
[16] Bär (2007) 32-40 and Maciver (2012a) 27-33.
[17] For discussion and summary of positions, see, most recently, Maciver (2012a) 33-7 and (2012b) 64-8, and Bär (2007).

perhaps one of the key climaxes of the poem. Given the variations in antiquity in accounts of who actually entered the wooden horse, Quintus seeks the authority of the Muses, most likely to affirm that he is giving *the* definitive account.

τούς μοι νῦν καθ' ἕκαστον ἀνειρομένῳ σάφα, Μοῦσαι,
ἔσπεθ' ὅσοι κατέβησαν ἔσω πολυχανδέος ἵππου·
ὑμεῖς γὰρ πᾶσαν μοι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θήκατ' ἀοιδήν,
πρίν μοι <ἔτ'> ἀμφὶ παρειὰ κατασκίδνασθαι ἴουλον,
Σμύρνης ἐν δαπέδοισι περικλυτὰ μῆλα νέμοντι
τρὶς τόσον Ἕρμου ἄπωθεν ὅσον βοόωντος ἀκοῦσαι,
Ἀρτεμιδος περὶ νηὸν Ἐλευθερίῳ ἐνὶ κήπῳ,
οὔρει οὔτε λίην χθαμαλῷ οὔθ' ὑψόθι πολλῷ.

Tell me now plainly, you Muses, in answer to my plea, who each of the heroes were who entered inside the cavernous horse. For you inspired me with all my song, before the soft down had spread over my youthful cheeks, as I shepherded my excellent flocks on the plains of Smyrna -- three times as far from Hermos as a man's voice carries, around the temple of Artemis in the garden of Freedom, on a mountain neither too low nor too high (*Posthomerica* 12.306-13).[18]

This is the only invocation of the Muses in all fourteen books of the *Posthomerica*, and the only time the primary narrator refers to himself (μοι). A number of intertexts play into the meaning of this passage. The clearest is the Muse invocation at the beginning of Hesiod's *Theogony* (22-8), where the Hesiodic narrator similarly speaks of his inspiration from the Muses as he tended his sheep on Helicon. *Iliad* 2.484-92, which also precedes an invocation, is also a strong influence, as is Callimachus *Aetia* 1 fr. 2.[19] Thus the epic heritage of the *Posthomerica* is marked by the *Iliad*, and nuanced by the Hesiodic influence, a didactic epic. Quintus' epic is marked by repeated gnomic

[18] Unfortunately, it is unclear what the significance of the temple of Artemis in the garden of Freedom is -- it most likely contains further meta-poetical significance but lack of knowledge of intertexts or of what is symbolised makes further discussion impossible (for attempts at interpretation, see Bär (2007) 57-9).
[19] The allusion is in the words μῆλα νέμοντι to ποιμένι μῆλα at *Aetia* 1. fr. 2.1. On the meta-poetical significance of the Callimachean intertext as a window allusion to Hesiod, see Maciver (2012b) 66-8.

statements, in both primary and secondary narration,[20] which create a strong ethical dimension to the text.[21] The Callimachean intertext, in such a programmatic passage, signals the Hellenistic lens through which these archaic texts are received, and also to the learned reading background which the *Posthomerica* by rights demands. This is a "Homeric" ethic of specific learning, marked by specific didactic characteristics.

At second glance, however, the intertextual indications are complemented by further program. Why does the narrator include the superfluous detail that he was shepherding his flocks on a mountain that was neither too low nor too high (line 313)? Hopkinson was the first to suggest that this line connotes the *style* of Quintus' poetry, namely that it appropriates a middle way that "avoids extremes", one that is "neither sublime nor pedestrian" and which produces "modest innovation within traditional parameters."[22] Hopkinson's original inclination to see more behind this line than the literal is surely correct. Not only is there nothing in this account which allows us to adduce autobiography for Quintus,[23] but each detail should be considered carefully for further, symbolic implications. This line designates poetic style and methodology,[24] but as I have argued elsewhere, *pace* James,[25] the point of inspiration takes place *while* this shepherd is engaged in shepherding on a hill neither too low nor too high, that is, engaged in other poetic activities before taking on the new challenge of composing epic.[26] Of these other poetic endeavours, whether published or not, we know nothing. Until now, the vocabulary used to describe this mountain has not been examined. The three styles of oratory, as set out in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.10, *gravis*, *mediocris*, and *adtenuata*, or the four styles of prose writing, as discussed by Demetrius *On Style* 36-7, ἰσχνός, μεγαλοπρεπής, γλαφυρός, δεινός (plain, elevated, elegant, forcible),[27] cannot be applied to epic poetry, which of

[20] Full discussion in Maciver (2012a) 87-123.
[21] See my discussion below of the shield of Achilles in *Posthomerica* 5.
[22] All Hopkinson (1994) 106.
[23] For the opposite view, esp. that of James (2004) xviii, see Bär (2007) 52-5, where he discusses scholarship to date on the issue.
[24] Against this view, cf. the insistent contestation of James (2004) xviii, with which see the discussion of Bär (2007) 59-60.
[25] (2004) xviii.
[26] Maciver (2012a) 36.
[27] As translated by Roberts (1902), ad loc. Demetrius is keen to insist on the mixing of all four styles as more the norm in composition (37). On the three styles, see Rowe (1997) 155, and cf. Kennedy (1994) 89.

course is an entirely different medium. As Quintus is closely imitating Homeric style, he has chosen the grandest of all vehicles of expression. Although sublimity, *hypsos*, is the subject of the *ps.*-Longinus discourse, flatness as an expression for style is not used by the rhetoricians, and signifies, rather, something purely physical.[28] The word for lofty, too, has a poetic pedigree in Homer (for example, *Iliad* 10.16, of Zeus' throne). Quintus has not chosen vocabulary which should alert the reader to the possibility of received categories of style, and thus the case for this particular poem as bracketed by the author as of a middle *style*, becomes all the less likely. This line is instead a modest type of *recusatio*, where the narrator states he was dabbling in lesser things when the call to write epic poetry came: technical it is not.[29]

We learn, therefore, nothing about Quintus either from the in-proem or opening of the poem. Both promote the conceit that this is a Homeric poem, and that we should take this one step further. This is both still the *Iliad*, and the narrator is still the "same" as the one who originally narrated the *Iliad*. The *Posthomerica* is positioned as a smooth run-on from the epic archetype, and its extreme imitation of Homeric language and style is such simply because this *is*, we are to interpret, still Homer. There is nothing in the in-proem, on the level of the narration itself, which could not describe the historically-received picture of Homer: Smyrna was of course one of the reputed birth-places of Homer in antiquity.[30] Similarly, the lack of a proem at the beginning of the poem is designed to be seen as a seamless transition from the *Iliad*.

This is, therefore, a continuation of the epic of all epics, only more than ten centuries later. As a result, all identifiable differences in thematic and ethical presentation stand out starkly within the overlying Homeric framework. This potential for emblematic difference, bespeaking *belatedness*, is seen in epitome in the poem's ecphrastic representation of the shield of Achilles in *Posthomerica* 5.[31] The shield described (5.6-101), just before the contest for it between Ajax and Odysseus (5.123-

[28] Interestingly, it is used only here in Quintus.
[29] Cf. the famous Vergilian *recusatio* at *Eclogue* 6.1-4, with the discussion of Thomas (1985) 61-3. On epic and rhetoric in this type of Imperial poetry, see Schubert (2007) 345-7.
[30] See Graziosi (2002) 73-9 for discussion and further references to ancient sources.
[31] For the shield of Achilles in the *Posthomerica*, see Maciver (2012a) 39-86, and Maciver (2007). Important discussion can also be found in Baumbach (2007).

321),[32] is ostensibly exactly the same shield as that described in *Iliad* 18, and given to Achilles at the beginning of *Iliad* 19, but the details on the shield in both the Posthomeric and Iliadic descriptions are different.[33] How can one and the same shield be described differently, especially in an epic which promotes itself as *still* the *Iliad*. These differences, therefore, take on an emblematic value for understanding the differences between the *Posthomerica* and *Iliad* on the macro level.[34] The structure of the ecphrasis in the *Posthomerica* follows overall that of the shield in the *Iliad* -- both open with a cosmological summary, both demarcate sections on peace and war, and both contain arable scenes.[35] At the beginning of the scenes of peace, the narrator describes a mountain of *Arete*.

> αἰπύτατον δ' ἐτέτυκτο θεοκμήτῳ ἐπὶ ἔργῳ
> καὶ τρηχὺ ζαθέης Ἀρετῆς ὄρος· ἐν δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ
> εἵστήκει φοίνικος ἐπεμβεβαυῖα κατ' ἄκρης
> ὑψηλὴ ψαύουσα πρὸς οὐρανόν. ἀμφὶ δὲ πάντῃ
> ἀτραπιτοὶ θαμέεσσι διεργόμεναι σκολόπεσσιν
> ἀνθρώπων ἀπέρυκον ἐὺν πάτον, οὕνεκα πολλοὶ
> εἰσοπίσω χάζοντο τεθηπότες αἰπὰ κέλευθα,
> παῦροι δ' ἱερὸν οἶμον ἀνήιον ἱδρώοντες.
>
> And highest of all on that divinely-crafted work was the rugged mountain of sacred Arete. It stood there mounted on top of a palm-tree reaching up to heaven. And pathways all round, made inaccessible with dense thorn bushes, kept men back from the sacred way. That is why many would shrink bank in awe of the sheer paths, and only a few -- toiling up -- climbed the holy path (*Posthomerica* 5.49-56).[36]

[32] On this contest, see, most recently, Maciver (2012c).
[33] As Katerina Carvounis (Athens) points out to me, in both Quintus and Nonnus the shield descriptions, games, and theomachies, despite (or because of?) their pointed Homeric heritage, are the most markedly different (non-Homeric) parts of each epic.
[34] Adapting, broadly, the discussion at Maciver (2012a) 42-8.
[35] Quint. Smyrn. 5.6-16 (cosmology based on *Iliad* 18.483-9), 17-42 (scenes of war based on *Iliad* 18.509-40), 43-4 (the demarcation is explicitly given), and then 45-96 (varied scenes of peace based on the city at peace at *Iliad* 18.490-508).
[36] In discussing this scene, I build upon arguments found first in Maciver (2007).

There is nothing like this on the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*. This mountain is given the most prominent place on the shield -- it is highest (line 49). The originality of the depiction -- namely, that it was built by Hephaestus at the very beginning -- is suggested by the emphasis on the divine craftmanship (line 49: θεοκμήτῳ ἐπὶ ἔργῳ). This is both the most important image in the description, and one the reader is to envisage as devised by Hephaestus in the construction of the shield (reported in *Iliad* 18). Homer, we are to conclude, did not include, in the narration of the shield's making in the *Iliad*, all of the scenes on the shield: Quintus himself leads the reader to this conclusion. The narrator at *Posthomerica* 5.97-8 states that there were countless other scenes depicted on the shield by Hephaestus.[37] Quintus' narrator, like Homer's narrator, has access to all of the scenes on the shield, but is selective, just as Homer's narrator selects scenes suitable for the *Iliad*. Moreover, we should understand that the narrator of the archaic *Iliad* read the shield as an archaic reader, just as the Posthomeric narrator read the countless scenes, and described some of them, as a post-Homeric reader with later, cultural expectations.[38] The mountain of *Arete* is obviously loaded with allegorical meaning. As I have argued elsewhere, the image is first and foremost Hesiodic, but because of a number of important intratexts within the *Posthomerica*, has a strong stoic significance too.[39] Quintus' narrator may strive to make this image Homeric, as discussed above, but the image is non-Homeric nevertheless. By placing this ethical symbol on the most emblematic of devices, a shield, and the most Homeric of devices, the shield *of Achilles*, Quintus posits later, Stoically-influenced morality on to archaic, non-Stoic representations. This is how Quintus reads Homer: an Imperial poet, but one who is re-focusing Imperial readers' attention on ethical aspects of the *Iliad*, now with an ethically-later dimension (as presented by Quintus in the *Posthomerica*). Quintus enlarges and alters what was apparently originally in Homer, despite the epic's seeming Iliadic continuation.[40]

[37] ἄλλα δὲ μυρία κεῖτο κατ' ἀσπίδα τεχνηέντως / χερσὶν ὑπ' ἀθανάτης πυκινόφρονος Ἡφαίστοιο (5.97-8).
[38] See Maciver (2012a) 47-8 for the problems and solutions in reading originality via these two lines.
[39] Maciver (2007) 263-7 and for the intratexts, 267-77. The key intertext is Hesiod *Op.* 287-92. I use stoic with lower case "s" as Quintus' Stoicism is most likely an admixture of Cynic, (neo-)Pythagorean and later Stoic thought. See Maciver (2014, forthcoming) and the seminal article on the mountain of *Arete* by Byre (1982).
[40] On "reading Quintus reading Homer", and specifically for the act of reading elicited by the *Posthomerica*, see Maciver (2012a) 7-13.

The Marks of Lateness

I would like to examine for the first time, in the remainder of this chapter, two other sections of the poem which have an important meta-poetical bearing on Quintus' epic belatedness: Nestor's song (book 4) and Niobe's lament (book 1). The latter scene appropriates a pivotal Homeric moment which is then applied in very different Posthomeric context. Nestor's song, however, acts as a narrative device to overcome the informational gaps left by the lack of a proem.

Nestor's role in the *Iliad* as wise councilor with a wealth of experience is developed in the *Posthomerica* a step further: he becomes very much the mouth-piece for the poem's moralizing,[41] and reflects or expands upon, on many levels, the wisdom-sayings delivered in the primary narration.[42] One of the most famous examples of this role is his consolatory advice about the nature of life and death to the grieving Podaleirius in book 6,[43] advice (esp. 7.66-95) which acts as an exposition of much of the primary narration's statements on fate and the afterlife.[44] He is also marked out and respected by his fellow Achaeans as a knower of old myths (8.480: παλαιῶν ἴστορι μύθων), and for that he is obeyed. These old myths (in that speech in *Posthomerica* 8) happen to be actual events already narrated in the *Iliad* (specifically, the prophecy of Calchas about the fall of Troy, *Iliad* 2.299-330). Nestor knows his *Iliad*, and expects the same from his audience: he is both a *mise-en-abîme* of the poet Quintus, but also a symbol of the ideal reader of Homer (which essentially is what Quintus himself is, as reflected in his readings of the *Iliad* in his own poem).[45] As first part of the games in honor of Achilles in *Posthomerica* 4, Nestor rises to sing an *encomium* of Thetis the prize giver, and includes in his song both her wedding feast and a summary of the great exploits of her son Achilles. His speech on one level acts as a recapitulation of events which both antecede the *Iliad* and which are

[41] Cf. Maciver (2012a) 109; Vian (1963) xvii calls him "le porte-parole de la pensée stoîcisante du poète." On Nestor in the *Iliad*, among many other studies, see Haubold (2000) 62-4, 69-75.
[42] On the gnomic statements spoken by the primary narrator, and for the following statistics, see Maciver (2012a) 92-3 and 90-2: of the 132 *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica* (a proportionally much higher total than in the *Iliad*, which has 150 *gnomai*), thirty-three are spoken by the primary narrator (only three are in the Iliadic primary narrator's words). As a result, the main narrative of Quintus' poem is unavoidably ethical / proverbial in tone. Nestor has the highest total of *gnomai* of all of the poem's characters: nineteen.
[43] Further discussion in Maciver (2012a) 103-6.
[44] More specific discussion in Maciver (2012a) 111-19.
[45] For Nestor as embodiment of Quintus the *poeta doctus*, I follow here the brief but cogent discussion of Schmitz (2007) 79-80.

contained in the *Iliad*, from Achilles' sacking of eleven cities, his defeats of Telephus, Eetion, Kyknos, Polydorus, Troilus, and Asteropaios; and also his killing of Hector, Penthesileia, and Memnon (4.150-610). Nestor includes events recounted in the *Cypria*, the *Iliad*, and the *Posthomerica* itself.[46] As this knower of ancient stories, he as the speaker-symbol of Quintus the poet recounts the tales which audiences and readers had received from three different poets (including Quintus), and thus Quintus positions himself as the heir to the post-Iliadic Trojan tales, in place of the *Aethiopis*' account of the deaths of Penthesileia and Memnon. Nestor's captive audience are described as hearing things from him that they already knew (4.162-3): καὶ τὰ μὲν Ἀργείοισιν ἐπισταμένοισι καὶ αὐτοῖς / μέλπε ("and he performed things to the Argives which they already themselves knew"), and this has been taken by some as referring to the tales of Thetis and Achilles narrated up to that point in Nestor's account, and by extension to the learned readers of Quintus who are already acquainted with the events which Quintus (here through Nestor) narrates.[47] The actual syntax points here, however, to a different scenario, if this meta-poetic reading of Nestor's audience as symbolic of Quintus' readers stands. The μέν of line 162 is answered by the δέ of line 169: εὔχετο δ' ἀθανάτοισι καὶ υἱέα τοῖον ἰδέσθαι ("he prayed to the gods to see a son just like this"). Thus, Nestor describes, one the one hand, the stature and appearance of Achilles (162-8), and on the other hand, prays that his son might be of such an ilk, when he comes to Troy (169-70). The emphatic καί of 162 at the beginning conjoins the information about Achilles' previous exploits with things which the Argives already knew, namely, his appearance, since they themselves saw him, but did not see all of his pre-Troy exploits. The multiple use of καί... τε (163-8) expands upon τὰ μέν (162), as those very things known are listed. I must, therefore, dispute some of the apparently meta-poetic characteristics of this passage: what the Argives, however, did *not* know was the pre-Homeric events of Achilles life, before they saw him. We cannot state, subsequently, that Quintus' readers by

[46] For the order of events and their inclusion within those epics, see Vian (1963) 142 nn. 1-4. Another recounting of the events surrounding the Trojan War, which essentially caps off the action of the *Posthomerica*, is found at 14.125-32, this time in the words of a *tis* speaker.

[47] Specifically Schmitz (2007) 83, on 4.162-3: "This attitude of the audience is a clear mirror image of the relationship between Quintus' narrator and his audience... it is clear, then, that Quintus uses such intertextual anachronies to provide a metapoetical commentary on his role as a belated epic poet who has to shape a well-known tradition for a learned audience."

extension were not fully aware of Achilles' pre-Homeric life. That is: according to this interpretation, Quintus' readers did not have access to the Epic Cycle, or at least, were unaware of these exploits. This is untenable, and while Nestor surely stands as the symbolic extension of Quintus the poet within the text, the meta-poetics, in this passage at least, *contra* Schmitz (2007), stop there.

Nestor sings in hexameters, in a contest, in front of a willing audience who award him a prize at the end. Before all athletic events, epic composition is given first place. There is a broad model for this pattern. Already in the *Odyssey*, two of Demodocus' songs act as a prelude to the games of the Phaeacians (8.104-235) in which Odysseus himself takes part.[48] The tradition of competition in song is itself ancient,[49] dating back to archaic poetic competitions at the games.[50] Hesiod himself speaks of gaining a prize for his song (*hymnos*) at a competition in Chalcis (*Op*. 654-7),[51] at the funeral games of Amphidamas.[52] So, poetic competition within a funereal context has a tradition.[53] Performances in hexameter recall too the rhapsodic competitions discussed particularly in Plato's *Ion*.

Emphasis on competition in words (124: εἰν ἀγορῇ ἐπέων πέρι δῆρις),[54] and pre-eminence in the *agora* (Nestor is described as pre-eminent in that respect, above both Odysseus and Agamemnon -- 4.123-7) could indicate too the types of epideictic performance found in the peak of sophistic oratory of the early Roman Imperial period, or the so-called Second Sophistic. The categorization, as characterizing prose writing and performance, is not a suitable label for the *Posthomerica*, despite

[48] Vian (1963) 140 n. 4 also points to the potential for a singing contest in the *Iliad*, at 23.886, if the variant ῥήμονες be read for the (surely correct) ἥμονες -- cf. Plutarch *Quaest. Conv*. 675a. Thus, Quintus, in typically Alexandrian fashion, could be signaling his reading of the variants at that place in the *Iliad*.

[49] One thinks first and foremost of the performance of Pindar's *Odes*, on which, see Carey (2007) 199-210.

[50] Plutarch discusses this at *Quaest. Conv*. 674d-675d, with reference to the Pythian games and the famed contest between Homer and Hesiod.

[51] Plutarch *Quaest. Conv*. 675a athetizes these lines -- for which, see West (1978) ad loc. There is insufficient evidence to doubt their genuineness.

[52] *Hymnos* there is used in the more ancient general sense for narrative or didactic poetry (see West (1978) 321).

[53] Cf. West (1978) 320-1 for discussion and references. The terminology used for the manner in which Nestor performs his praise of Thetis and Achilles is important: he begins by hymning Thetis (ὕμνεεν, 129), and proceeds to celebrate with song and dance, perhaps to musical accompaniment, as the verb μέλπω seems to suggest (147, 163), but his verses are most certainly hexameter, even though his song is reported in indirect speech (ἔπεσσιν, 171, makes this clear). It is most likely that Quintus is applying the more traditional significances to these verbs: *hymnos*, as discussed for Hesiod, need imply only ἀοιδή (song), especially given the emphasis on hexameter. For the praise aspect of μέλπω, cf. *Il*. 1.474 (with LSJ s.v. II. 2) with the entry in *LexfFrGrEp.* for further references.

[54] Quintus uses δῆρις twenty-five times, in varied contexts, from martial fighting to quarrels. An interesting use in Homer occurs at *Od*. 8.76, in Demodocus' song about Achilles and Odysseus quarrelling in words at the feast of the gods.

some attempts in that direction in recent scholarship,[55] but there are certainly elements throughout the poem which emphasize rhetoric. The *Hoplon Krisis* in book 5, in particular, contains traits which, in some respects, resemble the rhetorical exercises typical of the early Imperial period.[56] More recently, scholars have argued that parts, or all, of Quintus' poem were designed primarily to be performed.[57] What the scene does represent is virtuoso composition on a chosen mythological theme, for a given audience. Nestor stands in the middle (118 and 128: ἐν(ὶ) μέσσοισιν; 147: μέλπε μέσῳ ἐν ἀγῶνι, πολὺς δ' ἀμφίαχε λαός), a position reserved for speaking and judgment, but emphasized here as the middle of the *agon*:[58] Nestor is competing (albeit against no opponent, but for a prize, as part of the games). Similarly, a sophist would rise to speak extemporaneously on a theme chosen on the spot, and if well-delivered, would receive the acclaim of a similarly well-educated audience: all was in essence a display of learning, and the speeches themselves constructs of a very rigid and traditional educational syllabus.[59] While Nestor's *encomium* belongs to an early tradition of funerary song, the Imperial setting of Quintus' poem, and especially its early readership, elicits a more contemporary interpretation too.[60]

Quintus rarely emphasizes geographical phenomena other than those found too in the Homeric poems. In the case of Niobe, he alludes to Achilles' mythological *exemplum* in *Iliad* 24 in a most unusual manner, one which, again, points to the chronological distance between the two epics.

Δρησαῖον δ' ἐδάμασσεν ἀρηίφιλος Πολυποίτης

τὸν τέκε δῖα Νέαιρα περίφρονι Θειοδάμαντι

[55] Esp. Baumbach and Bär (2007) 8-15, and Bär 2010. See my opposing arguments in Maciver (2012a) 17-18 and esp. Maciver (2012c) 602-7.
[56] Discussion in Maciver (2012c) 604-6. Eustathius commented that Quintus' representation of the contest was rhetorical (1698.48).
[57] Cantilena (2001). At a recent conference, too, on Imperial Greek Epic (Cambridge, 2013), the idea of Quintus' performance was frequently raised as a realistic possibility.
[58] For Martin (1989) 95, all speeches in Homer are agonistic, but Nestor here in Quintus is competing for a prize.
[59] Discussion passim. in Whitmarsh (2005), and see too Anderson (1993) 55-64 on epideictic *meletai*.
[60] I do not wish to argue this point too strongly: we do not have enough evidence to suggest that Quintus' epic, in part or whole, was performed. What is evident is the influence of rhetorical *progymnasmata* in certain areas of the poem, especially ecphrasis, *encomia* (like this one), and *chreiai* (in Quintus, in the form of mythological *paradeigmata*) -- the most recent (excellent) work on this is Miguelez-Cavero (2008). The problems in recent scholarship on this theme (esp. Miguelez-Cavero (2008)) is that the poetic tradition has too often been ignored, as a result. Cf. my review of that book -- Maciver (2013).

μιχθεῖσ' ἐν λεχέεσσιν ὑπαὶ Σιπύλῳ νιφόεντι,

ἦχι θεοὶ Νιόβην λᾶαν θέσαν, ἦς ἔτι δάκρυ

πουλὺ μάλα στυφελῆς καταλείβεται ὑψόθε πέτρης, (295)

καί οἱ συστοναχοῦσι ῥοαὶ πολυηχέος Ἕρμου

καὶ κορυφαὶ Σιπύλου περιμήκεες ὧν καθύπερθεν

ἐχθρὴ μηλονόμοισιν ἀεὶ περιπέπτατ' ὀμίχλη·

ἣ δὲ πέλει μέγα θαῦμα παρεσσυμένοισι βροτοῖσιν,

οὕνεκ' ἔοικε γυναικὶ πολυστόνῳ ἥ τ' ἐπὶ λυγρῷ (300)

πένθεϊ μυρομένη μάλα μυρία δάκρυα χεύει·

καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀτρεκέως φὴς ἔμμεναι, ὁππότ' ἄρ' αὐτὴν

τηλόθεν ἀθρήσειας· ἐπὴν δέ οἱ ἐγγὺς ἵκηαι,

φαίνεται αἰπήεσσα πέτρη Σιπύλοιό τ' ἀπορρώξ.

And warlike Polypoetes struck down Dresaeus whom brilliant Neaera bore to wise Theiodamas when she had mingled with him in bed under snowy Sipylus, where the gods turned Niobe into stone, whose great tear still flows out from the hard rock above, and the streams of resounding Hermus groan out in response and the broad peaks of Sipylus, down from above which a mist, hateful to shepherds, always flies about. And she is a great marvel to all mortals who pass that way, because like a woman in great grief she pours forth countless tears, mourning as she does in her bitter sorrow. And you would say that it truly was the case, were you at some point to view her from afar. But when you come close, the sheer rock of Sipylus, broken off, appears (*Posthomerica* 1.291-304).

This is a vignette, an elaboration on the death of a minor hero, whose home or origin is given added emphasis in the narrative, for the sake of pathos -- a typical Homeric battle-scene device.[61] In this case, there is an unusual elaboration of detail for Mount Sipylus, where Neaera had conceived the warrior Dresaeus, the Lydian hero here stuck down by Polypoetes. Quintus uses the extension to

[61] Most thorough discussion is still Beye (1964).

provide further discourse on the original Niobe mythological paradigm spoken by Achilles to Priam at *Iliad* 24.602-20 -- the point of the tale being, that as Niobe could eat despite her extreme grief, so should Priam. Achilles alludes to the possibility (24.614-17) that Niobe, as a rock in Sipylus, still weeps. He distances himself from the definiteness of this point through his use of που and ὅθι φασι (614 and 615): νῦν δέ που ἐν πέτρῃσιν, ἐν οὔρεσιν οἰοπόλοισιν / ἐν Σιπύλῳ, ὅθι φασὶ θεάων ἔμμεναι εὐνὰς / νυμφάων, αἵ τ' ἀμφ' Ἀχελώιον ἐρρώσαντο, / ἔνθα λίθος περ ἐοῦσα θεῶν ἐκ κήδεα πέσσει (614-17).[62] Quintus concretizes what is only alluded to by Achilles.[63] The reader can now visit this very rock and see for him/herself that it actually is there, and if one looks far away enough from the site, it does indeed look like Niobe weeping.[64] What Achilles initially localized, Quintus verifies: what is potentially only fictional for the sake of the story, is actualized by Quintus, and is verifiable by the reader. Thus, Quintus vouches for the veracity of the Homeric tale, and counters the doubt cast on these verses by the Alexandrian scholia.[65] Quintus therefore marks out his belatedness as a later visitor of Homeric "landmarks". The meta-poetic bearing of ἔτι δάκρυ (294) is also clear.[66] Niobe was crying when Achilles spoke his paradigm, and is still crying when we receive this vignette in the *Posthomerica*. Ad-hoc poetic production, like Niobe's tears, but especially like Achilles' Homeric *narration* of those tears, flows easily on within Quintus' poem. He is part of this continuum of production, despite chronological distance. Moreover, because of this chronological distance, Quintus and his readers react to and re-mould Homer's poeticisms and narrative. Like Niobe who is now rock, and a great wonder to those who behold her

[62] "And now, I guess, among the rocks, among the deserted mountains in Sipylus, where they say the beds of the divine nymphs are, who danced around Achelous, there -- though stone -- she broods on the sorrows she has received from the gods."
[63] In this way, he mirrors the scholion AD on *Il*. 24.602, where it is stated that one can still see this rock.
[64] Quintus seems to follow very closely here the account in Pausanias 1.21.3. Pausanias, like Quintus, writes of the two perspectives -- from close-up, and from afar. Vian (1959) 131 wishes to see in the poem's careful description of the location evidence that Quintus was actually from Smyrna (which is in the vicinity of Sipylus), but there is nothing in Quintus' account which he could not have gained from Pausanias.
[65] For which see Richardson (1993) 341-3. The bT scholia, on *Il*. 24.614-17, insisted that the lines should be athetized since Achelous was in Lydia, not near Sipylus. For solutions to this and other apparent problems, see Richardson loc. cit.
[66] Nonnus (28.428-9) makes similar use of Niobe's still-flowing tears, drawing perhaps on Quintus himself: εἰσέτι δάκρυα λείβει / ὄμμασι πετραίοισιν ("she still pours out tears with her rocky eyes"). Nonnus makes extensive use of Niobe: 2.159-60, 12.79-81, 130-2, 48.406-8, 417, 424-32, 455-6. Cf. too Ovid *Met*. 6.301-12.

(299: ἡ δὲ πέλει μέγα θαῦμα παρεσσυμένοισι βροτοῖσιν),[67] Homer's epics are stable literary landmarks which produce reader-responses, in Quintus' case, on one level, in his production of the *Posthomerica*, and within that epic, on multiple occasions by which he can signify his relationship to those epics, by reading, recreating, and expounding them.

Noticeable within the passage, too, is Quintus' inclusion of a famous Iliadic simile: the mist which is hateful to shepherds (298) recalls *Iliad* 3.11, where the dust cloud raised by the advancing troops is similarly compared. Quintus alters, however, his word for shepherd: where the *Iliad* has ποιμέσιν οὔ τι φίλην, Quintus has ἐχθρὴ μηλονόμοισιν, a noun which does not occur in early epic, but which recurs in late epic, especially in Nonnus.[68] Quintus has appropriated this Homeric simile and has inserted it within a passage which contains so much evidence of *lateness* of composition, and has exchanged for shepherd a late-epic word for an early-epic one. Despite Quintus' seamless transition from the *Iliad*, and his own carefully constructed Homeric *persona* for his narrator, he leaves signs of lateness for readers to spot, who, like him, have read their Homer with minute care.

Conclusion

To write Homeric epic almost a millennium after Homer will inevitably bring with it signs of lateness. Quintus constructs an epic to remove such differences, to be *still* Homer, only to posit footnotes which point to the manner in which he wishes his epic to be read vis-à-vis the Homeric poems. Lateness is a position of advantage: as a reader of Homer, Quintus can insert within his macro-narrative readings of those epics which have been imitated and which have been puzzled over by every other post-Homeric poet (and) scholar. He can also, more immediately in terms of reception, continue the tales of Troy through a medium in which parts of those tales were already cast. This epic continuation is one which both emphasizes connection with the epic archetype, but which advertizes what post-Alexandrian epic, with its array of Homeric readings, can create as both homage and rival

[67] It is interesting to note the ecphrastic language in this description: θαῦμα (299), e.g., and ἐπὴν δέ οἱ ἐγγὺς ἵκηαι (303), where the reaction of the reader is elicited. Unlike similar signals in the shield of Achilles, the reader may personally attest to these feelings by viewing the actual object outside of the world of the poem.
[68] It occurs twice in Euripides (*Alc*. 573, *Cyc*. 660), nine times in Nonnus, and five times in Quintus.

to the richness discovered continually within the inescapable, ever-present Homeric poems. In Quintus, we are still reading Homer, and will continue to do so.